

## **John's Feeding Of The 5,000**

**A Sign of God's Providence**

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I have something for you this evening that I hope will be helpful. Going over this really opened my eyes to a few things, and hopefully I can get them across to you in a way that will be encouraging to you.

Did you know that there is only one miracle across the four gospels that is mentioned in all four gospels? Do any of you have any ideas which it is? I mean, when you think about it, you would think that as disciples they would have mentioned the same things, and the Synoptics do. Matthew, Mark, and Luke mention the same ones frequently together. But John is usually the oddball, and in this case, John actually includes one of these miracles that the others do as well, and it makes it especially significant.

It is the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. You will find it in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This fact makes this miracle quite significant. The feeding of the 5,000 hits another tier, if you will, because all four of them mention it.

It impressed the disciples so much that all of them remembered it vividly and wrote about it and they put it down there for us. God must have wanted us to contemplate what is in the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, so He hits us with it every time we open one of the gospels. So it is a very good lesson for us. It was a very good lesson for the disciples at the time and we will find out a few things about it that makes it even more significant.

But probably it is most significant in that it leads to Jesus' discussion about the bread from heaven in John 6, and of course then it gets to eating His flesh and drinking His blood and that great controversy that that caused among the Jews. And it was also a great controversy among the disciples and we find out at the end of John 6 most of them left Him. Let us go there just to open up with that.

**John 6:64-66** "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to Him by My Father." From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

That is all we probably need to know right now. But this miracle of the 5,000 ended up being a tipping point for those who were the called disciples of Jesus, the twelve, and the rest of them. So when they went away from there, their group was quite a bit smaller than it was when they arrived.

We are going to look at this miracle from John's point of view, and we are going to see some of its applications to us, how we can put it into practice.

Now, as we begin here, I just want to make sure you understand that this miracle is all about nourishment. It is all about food, it is all about God's providence, and keep that in mind as we go through it.

Let us start in John 6, verse 1. It runs through verse 14. We are going to take it in about three big chunks and one verse at the end so we can kind of stop and take stock of what we have just read. The first four verses where we will start set the scene. John was very good at basically who, what, where, when, how, and this is what he does here.

**John 6:1-4** After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberius. Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.

Did you catch all the little details of what is happening here? Jesus is on the east side of Galilee. Galilee is up in the northern part of Israel, north of Judah. It is a body of water and the River Jordan runs into it and then the River Jordan flows out of it going down the east side of the land of Israel to the Dead Sea.

And by the way, the Hebrew word for the Sea of Galilee is Kinneret, and Kinneret in Hebrew means harp. The Sea of Galilee looks like a harp, it has that shape. So they were on the east side of the harp, as it were, the northeast side. That area is known today as the Golan Heights. It is very contested land. It is held by the Israelis right now, but you better believe that the Syrians and the Lebanese would love to have it.

But a great multitude had followed Him all around that region. He had been on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, and He went and tried to get away, but they followed Him all the way around so that they could see more miracles. That is exactly what it says there in verse 2. They followed Him "because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased."

So He was doing a lot of miracles at the time. Most of them had to do with healing. Some of them were obviously demons cast out, but it was a spectacle. All the people being brought to Him probably on cots or on a stretcher.

But people would get up and walk or the blind would see or the deaf would hear and it was just one of those things that made for great entertainment. At least that is how they saw it. John gives us a very pointed insight into what the crowd was really there for. They wanted to see the miracles. They wanted to be entertained. They wanted to be titillated by all these wonderful things that were happening. They did not necessarily want to be taught the truth. There was not much Matthew 5:6 going on here in this crowd, you know, hungering and thirsting after righteousness. That is not what they necessarily wanted. They wanted to see the show.

Jesus must have put on a good show. I mean, He was not acting like an entertainer. He was simply doing what He came to do: To heal the sick and to cast out demons and to preach, and the people loved it. You could say that this was a crowd that basically had itching ears. If they were there for the preaching, they wanted to hear some new thing, and they just wanted to be entertained.

It was all emotional for them. It was not necessarily something spiritual.

Now, once we get into verse 2, John throws the word signs at us. Signs are very important in the gospel of John. He has, I believe it is, eight major signs that are in the gospel.

And He starts these 14 verses with the mention of signs, and He ends in verse 14 with the word signs as well or the plural sign and they kind of bookend this passage. So the whole thing between the two, verse 2 and verse 14 is all about this particular sign and what it meant. So it becomes very important to us.

Now, what are signs?

They are unusual occurrences, you could say, that transcend the common course of nature. But more specifically (obviously, miracles would be the same definition) signs as used in the book of John are miracles and wonders by which God authenticates the men sent by Him. Or by which men prove that the cause they are pleading is God's. You know that throughout the Gospels, the Jews were always asking Jesus for a sign.

They wanted His authentication of what He was doing and what He was preaching. And the signs, Jesus did several of them: we have the eight in John and He gave another one in Matthew that we all know very well, the sign of being the grave three days and three nights. He did others as well, but John picked these particular ones out to pinpoint various truths that show that Jesus was the Messiah or that Jesus had a certain title or Jesus had a certain function.

A lot of the times these are paired with some of the "I AM" statements that He made. This one in particular is paired with "I am the bread of life," which we will get to a bit later on in John 6. So it identifies the speaker as coming from God and the truths that He delivered through His preaching were also from God. And these signs then point to what God is doing.

Let us move on from there just a little bit. Otherwise, we will be staying too late. So just as a kind of a recap, these signs are works that identify who Jesus is as the Messiah, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, the Savior, etc. In the miracle, the feeding of the 5,000, is the proof of this, the evidence behind it, the evidence of a divine attribute, and in this case, the divine attribute that

really comes out is God's providence. That He is a great supplier of food. But not just physical food, but spiritual food and everything that we need.

The time setting here, John tells us, is the Passover. It is very near and this Passover is the third one in His ministry. So we are getting toward the end of His ministry. It is at this point, at this Passover, one year before His death, so He has one year left of ministry, and it marks basically the high point of His popularity. You know, I kind of played that up. The crowds were following Him everywhere and wanting to see what He was going to do.

But this is also the miracle that marks the beginning of the end. From this point on, His popularity declines precipitously, and events begin to hurtle toward the ultimate confrontation with the chief priests and the Sanhedrin and Pharisees, and all those. Now the timing of this, as it was just before the Passover, should have helped the people see what this sign meant. They should have been able to see He was talking about feeding them and giving them bread.

Tell that to the average church member and what does he think about? If he does not think of the symbols of the bread and wine of the Passover, he certainly thinks of unleavened bread and the holy days, and that is what they should have picked up on this, but they did not. They seem oblivious to it. They were not spirit-minded in this way. God had not called them yet. I will not say that the miracle went over their heads, but they did not get out of it what they should have, how it impressed the disciples that had actually had been called. Because as I said as we opened here, this made an indelible mark on the disciples that were there.

Let us go on; verses 5 through 9.

**John 6:5-9** Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?" But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little." One of His disciples, Andrew,

Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

Verses 5 through 9 is basically where the other accounts, Matthew, Mark, and Luke in their accounts of feeding of the 5,000 concentrate most of what they say. It is this interchange between Christ and the disciples that they focus on. But only John of the four says that Jesus does this to test them or he says specifically to test Philip, but it was truly a test of all of them.

He wanted to prove something to Himself. You could say that He wanted to find out where they were in terms of their understanding and their belief, but He wanted to also see if they would take a leap, if you will, of faith. If I can try to get into His mind from what I gather from all this that is happening, He wants to see if they had faith in His ability to provide for them.

You know, He wanted to know, to give them a test to see if they would turn to Him for providence. He wanted to see if they believed that nothing was too hard for Him, that He could do the impossible. If His power extended beyond the "little miracles" that He was doing for the crowds. He wanted to see if they really thought, really knew deep down that He was the Messiah, the Son of God.

In asking these questions He could find out some of these things from the way they answered the question. Now they fail, like we would fail. But they do not fail too badly. Philip does okay. Andrew does better. At least he finds somebody that has a little bit of food.

But they are still not thinking big enough. They still do not see Him as He is. Not fully. Now, all of them passed this test. We can see. Go to the end of the chapter here. We will pick up from where we left off, where it says "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more."

**John 6:67-69** Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" [He was giving them, there is the door if you are uncomfortable with all this.] And Simon Peter answered Him,

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

So this is the second time that Peter has said something of this effect. He had asked them, "Who do men say that I am?" And Peter gives the right answer. Jesus said, the Father told you that because you could not come up with it on your own. But here it seems that Peter was coming to understand it more and more but they were still a bit shaky.

They had to see all this take place because remember, the question that Jesus asked Philip was before the miracle, before the *big* miracle. And Peter's statement here is after it. So they still needed some bucking up in terms of their faith, but they knew at least intellectually that He was the Son of God, He was the Messiah, and He could do wonderful things.

But after this miracle, they knew He could do the impossible.

Let us move on here a little bit. We are still in verse 5. Notice Jesus' question. He says, "Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?"

Now why did He ask Philip? Does anybody have a guess why He asked Philip in particular? He was the local boy. He was from the city of Bethsaida and that was at the foot of the mountain. That was the place on the lake and he would know that town. He was like saying, "Philip, I have got a job for you. Figure out where we can buy, I do not know, 20,000 loaves of bread. And fish, nets full. And you know all the bakers here. You know where all the warehouses are. You know where the docks are. Where can we find all this food?"

Think about this. Obviously, He knows and it is reflected in his answer that this was an impossible thing. Even though he knew the lay of the land, he could not procure that much food. And it is at this point that John says this was a test for him, how he would respond.

Philip answered, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little." Now, did you notice that Philip did not answer the question that was asked? These are very important

things. Jesus asks where are we going to get the food to feed these people and Philip answers with, do you know how much that costs?

I will put this the other way. Jesus asked where is the source of providence and Philip answers, we cannot afford it. You can see how he did not do too well in this test. He misses the point altogether.

[Someone in the audience: Do you think maybe Philip had knowledge of their how little they had in their coffers?] Maybe that is a possibility. I have made the joke as I have gone through giving this, that he probably understood that Judas did have the money bag and he had been pilfering from it for quite some time and so he knew that we cannot afford this. What are you thinking of doing, Jesus? You know, our finances cannot be stretched. This is more than we can handle.

But he really, he should have known. Now remember, this is the third Passover, so he had been traveling with Jesus for a long time, two and a half years. They have been with Him all this time. They have seen so many miracles that He had done. But he came up blank on this one. We cannot do it. It is impossible. We do not have enough to provide.

He is still thinking very physically here about solving the problem in a physical way rather than the way Jesus wanted it solved, which was through faith. And now, like I said, Andrew does a little bit better, but even he is off course in his answer. He finds a little physical food. You know, these are the five loaves and the two small fish, one little boy's lunch and it is not even a very good lunch.

Barley was considered to be the poor man's grain, and he only had two little fish. I mean, they were like little brim or something, who knows, but they were for a boy. We do not know how little this boy was, but at least his mother had had the foresight to pack him a lunch, and here is Andrew was taken away from him. I am just kidding. Maybe the boy offered it or something, but Andrew does not see how Christ could work with such a paltry amount and such poor quality.

He does not see that it is an answer. That Christ actually did not even need the five loaves and the two fishes to do His miracle, but it was a start that He

could use to show the difference between how the beginning of the miracle was versus what He produced through His faith in God and God's wonderful miraculous power. And this is where I say that Andrew does not think big. In this case, he does not think that there is something to be made with just a little amount. You know, the small things.

God tends to do this a lot throughout the Bible. He will start very small but produce a huge amount or a great progress, or He will get the work done having started with just a minuscule amount. Andrew does not factor in the power of God to the problem. He is, like I said, thinking physically. I mean, hey, maybe everybody can get a micro-grain or a little bit of flesh. But I mean, it is almost like, why did he even say this? If he is thinking so physically, why did he even mention the little boy with his five loaves and two fish?

Let us go on, starting in verse 10 and we will read through verse 13.

**John 6:10-13** Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain so that nothing is lost." Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

It does not seem there was any fish left over, just bread.

Let us think about this. It is interesting what Jesus does here. The first thing that He does in order to do this miracle is that He brings order to the crowd. He brings order to the people. And I think His main reason for doing this, well, the obvious reason is it made distribution of the food easier, but I think the main reason He did this was because He wanted everyone to be able to witness what had happened. So He has everybody sit in an orderly fashion. Maybe the best way to think of this is to think of, let us say, a natural amphitheater, or if you do not have a good mind's eye picture of a natural amphitheater, think of a stadium. You know, like Panthers Stadium uptown.

Think of these people sitting in sections. He tells them all to sit down. The game has not started yet, but we all want you to sit down and watch this. And these are people in this section, and this section, and this section, and they go all the way around Jesus as He is setting up for this miracle.

And He has them sit, then recline on the grass. And He had them sit in sections, as it says, of 50 and 100. So they were grouped together in ways that they could be easily served. I imagine, just trying to make a guess here, that they were in 12 sections and the various 12 sections were then cut up into smaller sections of 50 and 100. And the reason is, is that He got His disciples to serve the food. Now maybe they use some of the other disciples that were hanging around too, but I am just going to go with the 12 because this is the lesson for them most of all and for us now that we are studying it.

So each disciple had one of these sections or a group of sections that he had to serve. And then Jesus asks a blessing on the food and this is where the real magic occurs or the real power occurs because He was giving thanks and asking God to multiply it.

And of course we know that Jesus said that the Father did everything. He was just a conduit for the Father's power and it was done through the giving of thanks. I kind of think of Matthew 11:25 where Jesus says He looked up into the heavens and He thanked God for these babes so that eventually He could give them rest as it comes down through that passage.

But the big thing was here that He communicated with God and gave Him His will on the matter, that is He wanted to feed all these people and He asked, then, God to multiply the bread and the fish.

Now after He blesses the food, He divides it by breaking it into smaller pieces. It is called fragments here, and putting them into the baskets, and then they are carried among the people.

Let us think about this for a minute. You have these baskets and they must have had many, multiple baskets, but Jesus blesses the food. And He has got five loaves and two fish to work with, and He starts breaking them. And somewhere between the breaking and the landing in the baskets, it filled them up. Same with the fish. He broke up the fish and it just multiplied.

We cannot think of it. Maybe we could do a good CGI movie on it. I do not know. But it is kind of incredible to think. You know, did He just nibble off a heel and then poof, the whole basket was filled and then He broke off a little bit more and it filled another basket and then He went through all the five loaves and the two fishes in this way, just breaking off a little bit and they, by God's power, multiplied until, as it says here, that each person had as much as they wanted. They were filled to the full.

Let us think, how many people were there? It says it fed the 5,000, but there is the very obvious detail there that they were 5,000 *men*. They only counted the men. And when you do demography, they usually say, well, there is an equal number of women. So let us just add another 5,000 women. And when you throw children in usually, it is two times or more. Back then they were quite prolific, needed a lot of kids for the farm, in the business or whatnot. But let us go with two. Suddenly you are up to 20,000 people, not five. That is just 5,000 *men*. At 5,000 women and 10,000 children, you are feeding 20,000 people with five barley loaves and two fish.

That is pretty impossible, would you not think, looking at it carnally. But Jesus did it. He made that bread and that fish *stretch*. Some of you with more children know; well in my family, mom was always hoping that whatever she made would stretch to feed all of us. And it usually did. I do not know that we ever went hungry, but I should say we never did go to bed hungry or anything. But Jesus has the world record on stretching dinner.

I mean, He made it stretch to 20,000 or more people! Who knows how many were there. But it is an amazing thing to think about. It makes me think of Ephesians 3:20. Paul writes:

**Ephesians 3:20-21** Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

So we are talking about a God here who can take just the smallest starter and give us exceedingly abundantly more than we could ask or think. That is an incredible thing to think about, especially if you have a spiritual problem.

Let us say you need more patience and you apply this verse, hey, if I ask God to help me be more patient. I do not know if that is a great thing to ask for because you will probably be tested beyond your patience, but He is willing to give you exceedingly abundantly more than you can ask. You will have become the most patient person that ever walked the face of the earth outside of Jesus Christ. I mean, you have got to think of it that way. God wants us to think big, ask Him for large things. Ask Him for more than then you could actually think and He will supply it if it is good for us, and especially those spiritual things.

James says, Hey, if you lack wisdom, ask God for it. And do not doubt. Because we see things like this in John 6. Look what He did with five loaves and two fishes! I mean, maybe you have a 6th grade education. It does not matter. God can work with that and give you the wisdom that you need, more than you could ask or think.

Now it may not work if you ask Him for billions of dollars. He probably says, you cannot handle that, but He is willing to keep you clothed and fed and more, more than you need. But make sure you ask Him big things.

There is a story in the Old Testament. I cannot remember where it is right now; I am thinking of this off the top of my head. But He told one of the kings, He said, "Strike the earth with these arrows." And the implication was that there were blessings that were going to come upon Israel for the number of times that he was going to strike the earth. And the stupid king only did three—one, two, three. And God told him essentially, "You fool. Why did you strike only three times? I was willing to give you victory over your enemies, and now you get three battles won. You will win three battles, and that's not going to be enough." And what happened? They went out, they won three battles, and then the king of Syria said, "Okay, you're mine," and he came in and devastated the land of Israel.

Do not strike the ground three times! When God says that He will bless you, take Him at His word. Ask for lots. You are His children. He wants to give you lots. More than you can ask or think. And if you are asking for the right things, according to His will, you will get them. You just have to have the faith to be confident that they will come your way and then be patient while He gives them to you. God is not a penny pincher.

God is not a God of scarcity. He wants to give you a lot. More than you can ask or think.

Also with this is, the church of God has long taught that you should break your prayers down fine, not only ask Him for more than you think you probably should, because we are all always reticent about going to the big guy and saying, can I please have a raise or something like that, but God wants us to break it down. Tell God exactly what you want. Be detailed. If you want a dog like my mother-in-law did, ask for this specific dog you want. Do not leave anything up to chance.

Ask God and you will get what you asked for. That is what my mother-in-law did. She wanted a dog that she thought would be best for the family, and she just laid it all out and that is what they got. A dog that will live in legend and lore in the Bulharowski family forever.

But do that a lot, do that for everything. And I think if you do you will end up having the things that you need, obviously, the things that God wants you to have, but it will also refine your prayer life and build your faith because you will see these things coming through.

Now I am not talking about the prosperity gospel here, not at all. That is not what I am saying. All you have to do is ask in Jesus' name and He will give you everything you want. I am not talking about that. But I am talking about in the normal course of life for the answers you need to problems or the things you need to survive or you know, young men who are in the beginning of your career, lay it out to God what you want to do and let Him work with you. And He will give you what you need.

But it is not physical things that are most important, it is a spiritual attributes. If you want to show more love to the brethren, ask God for the help to do that, and He will start giving you opportunities to show it and learn it and grow in it. Do you want more knowledge? He will give you the opportunity to get more knowledge. And on and on it goes. You have a tremendous resource in God and He will provide because He is the God of providence.

I also want to show here back in John 6 that He has the disciples clean up after themselves, after all of them. They gathered them up and filled 12 baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. Now, I think there is a very significant principle that is shown here, not only that God does not waste but I believe the fact that there are 12 baskets and there were 12 disciples, that Jesus paid His servants. He paid them abundantly with, in this case, food. This was their wages for the service that they had done in feeding all of those people and taking the baskets around and giving people something to eat.

I mean, look at I Timothy 5, verses 17 and 18 where Paul tells us,

**I Timothy 5:17-18** Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

And Jesus put His money where His mouth is, as it were, and paid those who worked for Him, the disciples. They each got a basket of food. I do not know, how long did it last? I think bread made miraculously might have had a long expiration date. Who knows? Maybe they were carrying those baskets around for weeks. I do not know, but Jesus paid those disciples for their labor.

Let us go back to Luke 6, verse 38 and just see how God provides or rewards for service. He says,

**Luke 6:38** "Give, and it will be given to you: Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

So these men had done this great service for Jesus as part of this miracle, and He gave them more than just their daily bread. He gave them bread for, I do not know, days or weeks that they could use as they continued to serve under Him and His ministry.

Now what lessons can we learn from this particular section? I have several minor ones. There are four of them.

1. God does things orderly and efficiently. He sets the stage and makes things work out in a very efficient manner.
2. God does not waste but He is very economical in His generosity. So nothing goes to waste here. It all gets used.
3. God provides generously for His servants. He recognizes work and He rewards with the same giving attitude that the servant uses in doing his work.
4. When God provides food, whether it is physical or spiritual, He always fills us to the full. We always get more than we actually need. It is brimful and running over. We should keep this in mind and expect it. Expect when you ask God for help or you need to grow in some area or whatever, He is not going to give you just a little. He is going to give you a lot, as much as you can handle for the state you are in at that point.

Let us go to John 6, verse 14.

**John 6:14** Then those men [those who had eaten], when they had seen the sign that Jesus did said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

The miracle did what it was supposed to do. It pointed directly to Jesus as the Prophet and this is the major lesson of the story. This is why John repeats the word signs here or sign. Because it confirms then what the sign was for. The sign was given so that Jesus could be identified as the Messiah.

Now why did they say the Prophet? Well, Moses said back in Deuteronomy 18:15 that there would be a Prophet who would come after him who would be like him. The be like him is the part that they picked up on because what is, perhaps arguably, Moses' most famous miracle. Manna—bread from heaven, and this Man, Jesus of Nazareth, did the same thing. He provided bread for the Israelites there in the wilderness, right? Exactly. They were out

in nature on this mountain and they were all hungry and probably murmuring about going back to Egypt or something. I am just kidding. It was probably more like kick out the Romans, but Jesus, out of compassion, provides bread in the wilderness and they made the instant connection between this miracle and the miracle of manna from heaven.

Yes, the sign worked but we know that they were still looking for a physical savior. They wanted, as I just mentioned, a king like David who would kick the Romans out and bring them freedom. There were times during His ministry that they wanted to make Jesus a king. And He kept saying, "No, no, no, that's not why I'm here."

But they got it—and they did not get it. So though they were able to make that leap to say, yes, this miracle proves, it is a sign that He is the Messiah and He is like Moses, therefore He is the Prophet that would come, they still were thinking physically and not spiritually. Now how can I say this? Let us go to John 6, verse 26.

**John 6:26-27** Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me [Remember they had followed Him around to see His miracles.], not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. [They just wanted their belly filled again. So they followed Him around and found Him and "Hey hey. Loaves, fishes? Anybody? You're going to do that again?" And Jesus knew them, knew what they were up to, and He just called them on it there. So He says] Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

He is telling them, you got your thinking is all wrong. I do not want you to be pursuing Me for food, for bread. You need to pursue Me for the spiritual things that I teach you, the knowledge that I have from the Father that He has told Me to give you. So they ask a good question.

**John 6:28-29** Then they said to Him, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God? [That is a fair question. What do we do to do what God wants us to do, that we do what is right?] Jesus

answered and said to them, "This is the work of God [Now you have to think. This is an overall principle, but He is speaking to the uncalled here primarily. So this is very appropriate for where they were in their conversion, if you will. So He says] that you believe in Him whom He sent."

He is telling them, you have to have faith in Me as God's messenger. I was sent here to give you a gospel, good news, and you have to believe that what I say to you is true. And that you need to accept it, to believe, and move forward. I mean, He was laying it all out. It was very clear, you need to have faith. You have to have faith in Me. It is only through Me that you will come to salvation. That is what He is talking about. You have to believe and that has to carry on then through one's whole conversion.

But in their response, you can see they did not get it.

**John 6:30** Therefore they said to Him [after hearing these words of life, as Peter would call them later.], "What sign will you perform then that we may see it and believe You?"

Are you kidding me? What work will you do? I think they were still feeling hunger pangs. Hey, maybe if we ask Him for a sign, He will feed us again. But they had just seen this magnificent sign there on the mountain and participated in it by eating it, and then they ask Him for another sign. They could never be convinced because their minds had not been opened. God had not opened their minds to have the faith. They were just acting like typical Jews of the time, looking for a sign and not believing that this was their Messiah, even though they had proclaimed it. They wanted another sign. Oh, we are not that easily fooled, you know or whatever.

**John 6:31** "Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

You see where they are going here? They are asking Him for more bread. Not like He just did not do that! I mean, He had fed however many thousands and now they wanted another meal.

**John 6:32** Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you [now this was a bombshell to them], Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, . . .

He blew their minds right there. Because they credited Moses with that. Moses gave us bread in the wilderness. Jesus says He did not. Do you not understand? There was a God behind Moses. Moses was just the vehicle. He says,

**John 6:32** . . . but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven."

He is telling them, look back in your history and consider this. Moses was an instrument and the bread came. I am an instrument. Now I gave you bread. Who was the One that gave it both times? The Father, and we could say the Son as well because He was the One in the cloud, He was the One in the fire, He was the One that was leading them through the wilderness. But they did not know about the Father. They thought it was just the God of the Old Testament. But Jesus was expanding their minds here and saying, look, it is the great God of the universe that supplied your fathers in the wilderness, and it is the same God which He calls the Father that was supplying them now. And what is more, the bread in the wilderness was physical manna. The bread that He gives now is a Person, the true bread from heaven.

**John 6:33** "For the bread of God is He [a Person] who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

They did not understand, obviously. They wanted it but they did not understand that the true bread from heaven was Jesus Christ Himself. And He would feed them. Of course, we get to what He says later on. They say,

**John 6:34-35** "Lord, give us this bread always." [and Jesus makes it very clear] "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

He is saying, "Guys, you're looking at the wrong things. You're totally missing the point now. It's not the bread. It's not the food." It is Christ. He is

more valuable than any kind of food that we are just going to eat and it goes through our system. This is a bread that comes and lives with us and remains in us to the point where He says here, "If you really grab onto Me, if you believe, you're not going to never hunger and you're never going to thirst." And He is talking spiritually, of course, because our physical bodies need the sustenance in the water, but He is talking way beyond their spiritual abilities to understand here. So He says in verse 36:

**John 6:36** "But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet you do not believe."

He just nails it right on the head there. They were, as He says in another place, not able to understand. They had not been given the ability.

But in this case, what He had done was He had revealed to them that salvation, redemption, we will just leave it at that, and all the supply, providence was in Him. So, it is a lot to think about.

What I said before is true. That you can ask God for whatever and He is going to give you, according to His will, as much as you can handle. That is true. But the true bread from heaven, the true thing we should be asking for is that we may live with Christ always. That He is in us. He has been put in us by the Spirit of God.

But we have to live with Him. We have to use that resource of God in us more than we do. And more specifically, we have to use it for those spiritual things of growth and overcoming and producing the fruit that the Father wants to see.

So feeding the 5,000 is a sign not just that He is Messiah, that is about as far as the sign went for those unconverted people, but for us it is also that He is the abundant source of all saving knowledge and every other grace of God that leads to our salvation and eternal life. It has got to come through Him.

That is why our relationship with Him must be firm and growing. It is vital that we rekindle and rededicate ourselves to our relationship with Him. Because all the good things come through Him. So keep this in mind as you walk with Him toward the Kingdom of God.

